

Getting and Keeping Rural Communities Connected



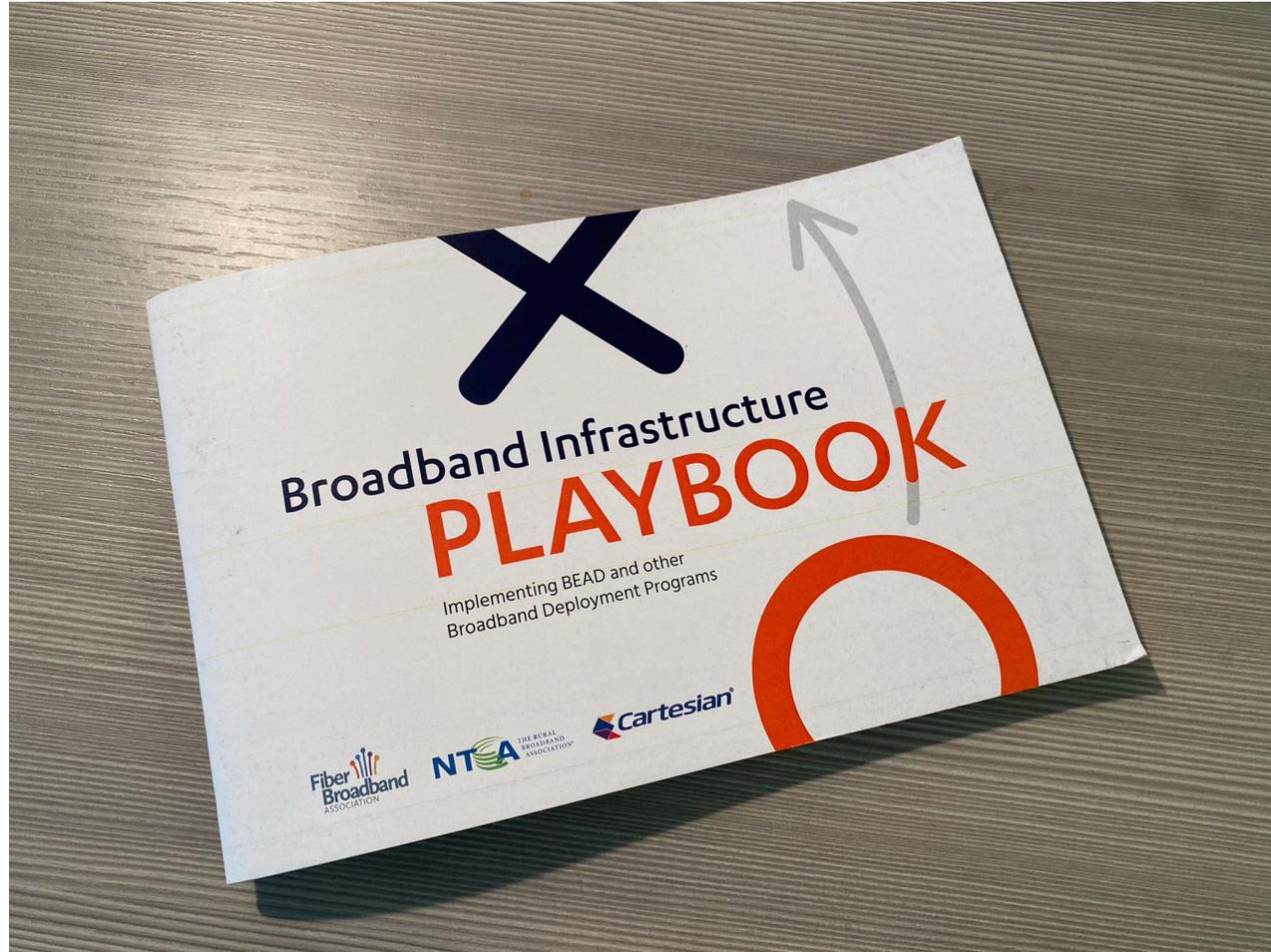
Mike Romano • April 2022 • Utah Broadband Advisory Council



Three Key Aspects of Effective Broadband Planning & Policy

- **Proven Performance**
- **Proven Platforms**
- **Sustainability**

Where to Start?



Broadband Infrastructure Playbook

- **Recognizes States are in Different Stages of “Evolution”**
 - Some have long-standing offices and/or multiple rounds of grants
 - Others just starting to form and have never run a grant
 - Most somewhere in between
- **Regardless of Staging, BEAD will be Different!**
 - Statutory prescriptions on priorities – scalability; area eligibility
 - Statutory prescriptions on policies – e.g., interconnection & low-cost option
 - Timelines and planning cycles – LOIs; action plans; initial & final proposals; FCC maps; grant programs; challenge processes
 - Questions outstanding – weighting/scoring? other strings?

Broadband Infrastructure Playbook

- **Playbook Aims to Give States a “Running Start”**
 - Covers “life cycle” of program administration -
 - Office formation & best practices
 - BEAD application to NTIA
 - Grant program design
 - Grant program administration
- **Offers Checklists/Templates & Case Studies/Best Practices**
 - Examples of how other states have done things
 - Statutory prescriptions on policies – interconnection & low-cost option
 - Highlights important goals – consumer focus & sustainability
- **Updates Will Come After NTIA Releases NOFO**

Key Aspect 1: Proven Performance

- **Look to proven performance for future results**
 - Vetting of providers is critical – cf., RDOF
- **Local presence, local knowledge, & experience all should matter**
 - Hard-to-serve areas are harder to serve if you don't know them
 - Track records of performance in building networks *and delivering services* are important – look to responsible stewards
 - Learning on the job how to troubleshoot a customer router problem at 3am is no way to run a broadband network

Key Aspect 2: Proven Platforms

- **Look to proven platforms for future results**
 - Vetting of platforms is critical – cf., RDOF
 - Look at where so many of the mapping errors come from
- **These are government/taxpayer funds – not an emerging technology speculation fund**
 - Betting on platforms to do things that haven't been done before on a widespread basis is not an effective use of funds
 - Don't waste a generational opportunity to deliver services to consumers on speculation and promises
 - Law also requires prioritizing “scalable” networks

Key Aspect 3: Sustainability

- **Don't fly "Mission Accomplished" banners once networks are built**
 - The job isn't done with the network is done
 - Goal here is not networks for networks' sake, but rather delivery of services for users that will be affordable and keep pace with demand
- **Focus on sustainability is essential – and easy to overlook**
 - Ongoing importance of universal service policies & mechanisms
 - Failures of federal policy last 10 years should be instructive